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Elkhartan's Yacht Reported Missing Off China's Coast

John L. Van Doehren, 24, of 1305 Woodward, and three companions aboard the 14 ton yacht Tora, were reported missing off the coast of Communist China today.

A spokesman at the U. S. consulate in Hong Kong said nothing has been heard from the crew since July 7, when the Tora left Formosa for Hong Kong on the third leg of a projected two year cruise around the world.

The consulate was not even aware that the boat was in the vicinity of the British China coast colony until Van Doehren's mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Van Doehren, wrote to ask information about her son.

Other members of the crew are D. C. (Buzz) Bohning, 26, Belmond, Iowa; Allen T. Farmer, 26, Chattanooga, Tenn., and D. L. Martin, 27, Seattle.

Kidnaping Hinted

There was no way of verifying immediately the obvious speculation that the Americans have been kidnaped by the Communists.

Van Doehren is a former Marine jet pilot and the others were former Navy jet pilots. They were discharged in Japan in March.

The adventurers reached the Formosa port of Keelung July 4, after stopping off for a week at Okinawa. The Tora was last seen when it left Formosa on July 7. The trip had started in Yokohama, Japan, on May 22.

Bid For Business

Their two masted sailing yacht has a diesel auxiliary engine. The four joint owners ordered it from a Japanese ship builder two years ago. It was completed March 19.

The ship was built according to the specifications of a New London, Conn., shipbuilder and was equipped with a radio.

Each man carried a card which read:

"Adventure unlimited, Yacht Tora, diving, photography, undersea research, unusual assignments. Inquiries to: 1305 Woodward ave., Elkhart, Indiana, U.S.A."

They hoped that the cards would get them special assignments to help finance the trip.

Back To College

The crew had planned to finish the tour in time for three of them to return to college in the fall of 1959. The fourth member had completed his college education.

Mrs. Van Doehren could not say whether the group had received any special assignments. She forwards all letters to the travelers.

Mrs. Van Doehren has been employed in the insurance department of the St. Joseph Valley bank for 15 years.

Van Doehren graduated from Elkhart High school in 1951.



J. L. VAN DOEHREN